



children's home + aid

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Testimony to the Human Services Commission

Children's Home + Aid is a leading child and family service agency in Illinois. Each year, it protects, educates and counsels more than 40,000 children, youth and families to improve their lives. Since 1883, we have been recognized for achieving outstanding results through programs that focus on child abuse prevention, healthy child development and strengthening families.

Cuts to programs like Unified Delinquency Intervention Services (UDIS), which had its funding eliminated from the DHS FY12 budget, sacrifices community-based programming that saves tax-payer dollars down the road. Youth services programs costs a mere \$832 per year per youth served, compared to a cost of \$89,425 per year to incarcerate a youth in an Illinois Youth Center.

Children's Home + Aid's UDIS program provided skills-based intervention and counseling services to troubled youth to prevent additional, long-term involvement with the court system and to help youth remain with their families. 95% of youth served remained safe in their homes.

Children's Home + Aid is a member, and I serve as founding Chair of Illinois Partners for Human Service, a diverse, multi-disciplinary coalition of over 600 social service providers, philanthropic funders and civic groups united in its mission to meet the human service needs of individuals, families, and communities. Illinois Partners advocates for quality services; adequate funding; and measurable results.

Human Services has suffered disproportionate cuts in state funding over the last few years. Over the last decade, the state has cut its real investment in various human service programs collectively by more than \$4.4 billion. None of the other core service areas - education, healthcare or public safety - have experienced cuts of that magnitude. In FY12 human services again received disproportionate cuts, with a reduction of 17.8% to Department of Human Services (DHS) from the FY11 budget. Disproportionate cuts to human services is not in the best interests of Illinoisans.

In addition to budget cuts, the backlog of unpaid bills is forcing human services and other providers to serve as unwilling lenders to the state of Illinois. Illinois must get caught up to a responsible payment cycle and lawmakers must decide on a reasonable restructuring plan to pay the funds owed to providers.

We urge the Human Services Commission to recommend a balanced approach to the budget and to invest in human services. Shared sacrifice in challenging economic times must include examination of all areas of state funding, and a refusal to disproportionately cut human services.

Respectfully submitted

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